

A Personal Paper

Commemorative of Twenty-five Years of
Theological Service in the Department of Systematic Theology

Read before the Martensen Seminar
Drew Theological Seminary

By

Olin Alfred Curtis

Privately Printed

1914

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With sincere Regards,
Olin A. Curtis.



GENERAL PAPER

THIRTY-FIVE YEARS OF
SERVICE IN THE DEPART-
MENT OF AGRICULTURE

BY
J. H. HARRIS

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A PERSONAL PAPER

COMMEMORATIVE OF TWENTY-FIVE YEARS OF
THEOLOGICAL SERVICE IN THE DEPART-
MENT OF SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY

READ BEFORE THE MARTENSEN SEMINAR
DREW THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

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PERSONAL PAPER

THE PERSONAL PAPER OF THE PRINCE OF WALES

The personal paper of the Prince of Wales, as it is called, is a collection of letters, notes, and other documents, which are of great value to the public, and which are now being published for the first time. The collection is of great interest, and it is hoped that it will be of great value to the public.



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THIS is the twenty-fifth year since I began to teach Systematic Theology, and, in celebration of the event, I want to read before this seminar a personal paper of commemorative intent.

Inasmuch as this celebration is of modest design, primarily for myself and certain men who are interested in my theological life, my paper may fittingly commence with reminiscence.

THE CALL TO BOSTON

IN 1889 I was, at thirty-eight years of age, pastor of our first church in Englewood, Chicago. It was a clear winter day (Abraham Lincoln's birthday), and I had been making pastoral calls. Returning to the parsonage, I found a telegram from Boston. It was signed "G. M. Steele," and read:—"You have to-day been elected professor of Systematic Theology." To say that I was surprised is not enough to say—I was thrown into confusion. Systematic Theology, it is true, had already won my heart, and was beginning to dominate my plans. My ambition was, however, to become, not a teacher, not a professional theologian, but simply a doctrinal preacher. My model, I may as well say, was Canon Liddon, and a portrait of the supreme preacher of St. Paul's was always before me as I worked in my study. For Phillips Brooks I cared extremely. I found a tonic in the very atmosphere of the man. Spiritually he reached my hidden nature and set all my longings free. And yet Phillips Brooks was not, could not be, my real master, for he never satisfied my deep and growing need of doctrinal finality. His sermon was to me like some wondrously beautiful bird that flies and flies, high and higher up in the amazing blue, but never alights, never finds even its own nest.

Accurately to remember across a period of twenty-five years, and then fairly to estimate one's actual performance is, I admit, a difficult task; but I hold the opinion, anyway, that in my ministry there was

considerable promise of the ultimate realization of my ambition to become an effective doctrinal preacher. Gradually my people were getting an interest in Christian doctrine. All about me, in the restless city, preachers were exploiting "newspaper subjects," and cultivating blaring methods; but my congregation appeared to be satisfied as their own preacher quietly tried to make them apprehend the great redemptional peculiarities of our faith.

EVEN now, after all the busy, dimming years, I can call up—idealized somewhat, perhaps—the inspiring scene in that Chicago church. How the faces stand out as in high relief! How finely they are defined here and there by the magic of the soft light! How they seem now and again to *bear toward* the preacher! How a few faces spring out into space in dramatic token of sermonie capture! How, on somewhere in the movement, all the faces melt into one glowing mass of Christian interest!

It was Bishop Merrill who, at last, turned me toward Boston. The substance of his argument was this:—"It is, as you say, important to preach; but our preachers need the right kind of a message; and such a message you can, I think, give to them. As to this Chicago pulpit, it can be filled much more easily than we can find a suitable man for the Boston chair. And beyond all this, there is my personal conviction that you ought to go to Boston."

THE MARBURG VISION

BEFORE considering the vision which I had in Marburg, there should be noted a few points of my Boston experience; but these points I must treat with economy. I taught in the School of Theology, Boston University, from September, 1889, until March (Easter), 1895. In the first four years of this period, I worked out a complete system of doctrine, using a part of the system in a course of dictations to the students. All this time, though, I was doing another and (as it turned out) more important thing—I was making a first hand study of the general theological situation, a study more searching and comprehensive than had been possible in the pastorate. As a result of this study, I gained a new and severer test for the system of doctrine which I had so laboriously constructed; and under this severer test, unflinchingly

applied, I pronounced my elaborate work a failure. Here and there, in the system, one could find a worthy feature; and there was, perhaps, in some of these worthy spots, a dim prophecy of more vital things to come; but, taken as a total, my work was an imitative scholastic performance without any living relation to actual needs. I said to a friend:—"That scholastic scheme can supply no preacher with what he should have, to meet the forces which are undermining our Christian foundations." It took all the courage I could summon, but squarely I faced the failure, refused to publish my work, and asked our Lord to keep me strong and guide me by His Spirit. This much I say because just this much is essential in approaching my experience in Marburg. Had I inveigled myself into any degree of satisfaction with my Boston work; had I, to comfort my pride, or to please my friends, allowed the publication of my first book, then, as I now think, no theological vision would ever have been granted me.

But right here I need to be careful, or I will suggest a wrong inference. This failure to build a vital system of doctrine was not the cause—strictly speaking, it was not even the occasion of my leaving Boston. The failure has been given place in this paper solely because it had significance in the preparation for my later theological outcome.

When I analyze this preparation, I easily discover several features, but the feature which I care to emphasize is this:—The way in which I met the failure started in me a mood of extraordinary theological longing, of consequent prayer, and of what I will dare to call dynamic expectation toward Christ; and this extraordinary mood psychologically made possible the remarkable experience which our Saviour, as I believe, gave to me.

It was in this peculiar mood that I reached Marburg, on the river Lahn, in April, 1895. This German town I had chosen, not because of its famous university, but precisely because of one man—Professor Wilhelm Herrmann. Some years before I had become interested in *Ritschlianism*, even going to Göttingen to hear Albrecht Ritschl himself; but in the last three years it had come to me more and more convincingly that in Herrmann I would find the Ritschlian teacher who could benefit me most, and, possibly lead me into a land of theological promise. Thoroughly to discuss Herrmann, is, in this connection, most unwarrantable. Barely will I say that I was profoundly moved by the man's powerful appeal; but, in the final test, his message did not meet the demands of my own Christian experience; neither

could I make his message square with the teaching of the New Testament as I had come to understand that teaching.

Giving up Herrmann as inadequate, my theological longing only increased. It was with me now all the time, and so affected me, both mentally and physically, that a strange, burning restlessness took hold of me. While in this condition, there came a day (in June) when I dropped my work, and, with no clear plan in mind, started out for a tramp. As now, after eighteen years, I remember it, I avoided the popular road leading up to the old castle (where Martin Luther wrote "in large letters" on the table,—"*Hoc EST corpus meum.*"), and crossed the Lahn into Weidenhausen. Be that as it may, I came, after a long walk, to a wooded hill, and began to climb it. Perhaps a half hour I had been climbing, when I reached a quiet nook where the trees entirely shut me in. Right there in that nook my prayer was suddenly answered. The whole outline of that system of doctrine which afterwards I tried to express in *The Christian Faith*, stood out in my mind as vividly as a range of mountains stands out in a bright day. There was nothing beyond the natural—no trance, no dream, no absence of mind even. I was utterly myself. I could see the clouds drift, I could hear the branches of the trees chafe and strain in the wind. But, for the first time in my life, I *saw* the whole sweep of redemption in all its interlaced social and moral meaning.

This was my "theological vision." I call it a "vision" to protect the fact of its very peculiar quality, and I do not consider the word as too large; but I never regarded the experience as having any authority, or even as having any value beyond its worth in Christian suggestion.

BUILDING A SYSTEM OF DOCTRINE

TAKING this Marburg vision as a kind of Christian clew, my next concern was to use this clew in the actual building of a system of doctrine. In building such a system, I must be, I held, loyal to the doctrinal data in the Bible, but these data themselves should be interpreted from the standpoint of Christian experience. And, in connection with this experience, fundamental opinions in Ethics, Psychology, and Metaphysics, could be cautiously, subordinately used with the purpose of better bringing out the plan of redemption as an organic whole.

At this point I wish, even at the expense of repetition, most em-

phatically to make it evident that the Marburg vision was not allowed to displace rational search under the principle of ultimate Biblical authority. Indeed, I would like to have you all fully realize that the vision served merely as an indicative stimulus for patient work of several kinds. Without any vision, my first system of doctrine cost me four years of labor; after the Marburg experience, my second system of doctrine cost me more than eight years of labor. In the first place, before seeking any public hearing, I gave about four years to quiet investigation and personal test. One fourth of this time I spent in philosophical study, especially in Moral Science; and three fourths, in Biblical study, especially in New Testament Theology. For one thing, I went anew through all the Pauline epistles, examining exhaustively every passage having a possible bearing upon our Lord's person and redemptive work.

Having completed this period of personal search, I made ready for a public test. I prepared forty lectures; and every year, for four years, I delivered as many as I could of these lectures. I lectured, not only to our students in the Seminary, but also before Preachers' Meetings, Annual Conferences, and Summer Assemblies, thus reaching hundreds of ministers, young and old. Not only so, but I made these lectures the bases of "doctrinal talks," which I gave to men in the religious meetings of the Young Men's Christian Association. Not only so, but these same lectures I wove into the warp of doctrinal sermons which I preached in churches all over the land—not Methodist churches alone, but Presbyterian, Congregationalist, and Baptist churches as well. In one year, I preached on thirty-eight Sundays, and in nearly every sermon there were points taken directly from my theological lectures. In short, before beginning to write my book, I secured every sort of test, personal and social, which was to me available.

To write my book, the trustees of our Seminary (through the kindly concern of President Buttz, it should be said), voted me leave of absence for one year. The plan carried out in writing the book was somewhat peculiar. From the most significant books and articles in any way pertaining to my task, I made extended quotation, with personal comment, until I had more than a thousand pages of notes; these notes were added to my forty lectures; and then all, notes and lectures, were fully indexed, and made to serve as a portable reference library. But this reference library was ever kept in a very subordinate position.

In doing a day's work, a first draft was written out directly and rapidly. In truth, this first draft was a purely extemporaneous utterance, and an utterance for a certain audience which I held always in view. I imagined myself speaking, either to this audience, or for the precise benefit of this audience. The heart of the audience, as I imagined it, was the company of students that, the year before, I had met for the weekly lecture. Then, about these students, there was a larger company of Methodist preachers. Then, about students and preachers, I imagined a yet larger company—a multitude of men and women, every person of them having in conscious experience a vital relation to our Lord. This extemporaneous draft was, afterwards, by means of the reference library, revised, and perhaps even enlarged; but extreme care was exercised to preserve the entire quality of the original utterance. My one fear, you see, was that I would drift away from human and Christian reality and yield to that scholastic ambition which had rendered my first system of doctrine so unvital. Indeed, I will confess here that I was so afraid of the scholastic temper and the academic tendency that, in choosing a place to write my book, I avoided the university town altogether. And, further, having, for a peculiar reason, selected Wiesbaden, I avoided the parts of the town given over to domestic comfort, and rented a room looking right over the busy, open market. At least three fourths of *The Christian Faith* was actually written with the sounds of the market constantly in my ears, save when these sounds were overwhelmed by the chiming and booming of the great church bells.

Belonging to my Wiesbaden sojourn, there is one incident of exceptional interest. As a result of overwork and careless exposure, I was tardily overtaken with a complicated sickness. The worst feature of it was a partial paralysis of my right arm. Not a word could I write without pain; and to accomplish even so much as a line of my manuscript, I had to lift my right hand from point to point on the page. For a time, I urged myself on with my task, writing a few minutes, and then, to ease my arm, walking about the room, or looking out of the window to watch the endless change in the market scene. But, after some days, worn out by the suffering and nervous strain, all creative energy failed me and I gave myself up in sheer abandon to my wretched physical state. Certainly my situation was discouraging. I had come to Germany expressly to write this book; only a few months remained of my leave of absence; my time was seriously going to

waste; the doctor's remedies were not, as far as I could judge, reaching my case—my trouble loomed large!

One afternoon—it was about three o'clock—I was lying there in the darkened room, homesick beyond description, when I heard steps in the outer hall, then a jumble of voices, then a knock at "No. 4," my own door. Thinking that it was a *hausmann* of some sort, I did not get up, but called out loudly:—"Herein!" The door opened and a man entered. Dark as it was in the room, I could make out the face.¹ I sprang from the bed, exclaiming:—"Why, Doctor Horton, how did you ever get here?" It was Robert Forman Horton, the English preacher. In danger of complete blindness, he had come from London to Wiesbaden to see Dr. Pagenstecher, the eminent oculist. Hearing of my sickness, he had persuaded a nurse to companion him to my place. To me, at such a time, this visit was something as if St. John himself had dropped upon me suddenly out of Glory! Soon, very soon it seemed to me, Dr. Horton turned from his own affairs, and asked me question after question, under increasing concern, until he had fully measured my calamity. Then, with finest tact, he led me away from all my ills into an earnest discussion, which refreshed me greatly, partly because he touched upon new books of worth, and partly because he satisfied my prodigious hunger for the dear old English language. For nine months nearly, I had heard spoken, not a word in English beyond the brashy exclamation of a tourist, or the parrakeet remark of a waiter; but now I fairly feasted upon the generous English of a master of English speech.

At last there came a pause, a "pregnant silence," which lasted several minutes. Then, as enquiringly as a child, Dr. Horton said:—"May I try to pray for both of us?" Try! He made such a prayer—of human longing, of spiritual comprehension, of Christian daring in seizure of the unseen—as I had never before heard. But the most remarkable thing came at the end. He stopped speaking, but remained kneeling and was motionless. Expecting something, I knew not what, I opened my eyes and saw—a face transfigured. His eyes were closed, but his other features actually glowed, and there was plainly spreading over the entire face an expression of ineffable peace.

With Dr. Horton's visit I gained a new courage; and, realizing that I now needed the tonic of a more bracing air, I went to Switzerland. I reached Lucerne on the night of the last day of May. On the Felsberg, high up over the Lake, I found a suitable room. From the

market-place to the mountains in one day! All about me were the Alps; near at hand, the Rigi, and Stanserhorn, and rugged Pilatus; in the shining distance, the many snow-covered peaks of Uri and Engleberg. I felt, I think, somewhat as the poet of the Lord felt while singing the "Song of Ascents":—

"I will lift up mine eyes unto the mountains:

From whence shall my help come?

My help cometh from Jehovah,

Who made heaven and earth."

HERE, in this Alpine nest, so far above the town that its noises came up to me subdued into a sort of mysterious music, I worked for nearly two months longer; and thus finished my book after nine months of anxious labor. The last word was written between four and five o'clock on Wednesday afternoon, July 27, 1904.² My inner experience on completing my task, I dare not attempt to tell. But what I did after leaving my room, I can tell. I walked, as fast as I could walk, *toward the mountains*. I found just the spot for my purpose, and remained there, gazing, while God lighted up the mighty masses, summit beyond summit, and range beyond range, with sunset fire.

THESE three chapters of reminiscence finished, my plan further requires a more important thing which concerns theological deposit itself. I want to answer this question:—"In the period of twenty-five years, what has been the theological deposit in my own personal belief?" I mean to find out, and frankly to state, or indicate, what my entire experience, in teaching Systematic Theology, has done for me and in me, theologically. As with the chapters of bare reminiscence, so here again my aim is to secure something of value both for myself and for those who are interested in my theological development and consequent position. To get at this deposit, I will first examine my entire theological utterance since I began to teach. Then, I will gather up and state my Christian beliefs as they are to-day.

In addition to many lectures, addresses, and sermons, there were, I find, between 1888 and 1914, fourteen utterances which have real theological significance.³ These fourteen utterances have all been published in either books, or pamphlets, or church and religious periodicals. Careful examination of this mass of opinion reveals four atti-

tudes which should be noted. First, there is the attitude that I had when I went to Boston. I will name it *the bearing of the theological pastor*. Theology was studied with zest, doctrines were highly valued and often used, but my test was essentially pragmatic. Even the truth in doctrine was to be discovered, as I believed, from the standpoint of evident utility in forming individual character and in rendering the church more living and aggressive. In those pastoral days, which lasted well into my second year of teaching, I was ever searching for the doctrinal implications of Christian experience. I cared much for John Fletcher. I had a patient eye toward Schleiermacher. Most eagerly I contrived to take a summer course of lectures under Professor Frank in Erlangen.

Directly following this pragmatic period, there came *the bearing of the anxious apologete*. The need of the hour, it now seemed to me, was to defend the faith. In this period, there were, without question, times of extreme anxiety, when I became morbid; and I was, I fear, now and then stricken with religious hyperæsthesia. It reminds me of a remark I once quoted from the poet Klopstock's father:—"Gentlemen, if any one says anything against the good God, I take it as an insult to myself, and challenge him on the spot." As calmly I look back over this apologetic period, I am inclined to think that, under all my stout assertion, there was lurking fear. But, if I was afraid, my fear was not due to a lack of confidence in Christianity itself, but was due to a lack of confidence in the theologians who were commanding the attention of the church. I said again and again:—"The Christian Faith is not getting a fair chance." One theologian there was, though, whom I never doubted. I mean James Orr—now "at home with the Lord." About this time his "Kerr Lectures"⁴ were published in *The Christian View of God and the World*, a book which helped me exceedingly, and a book which I still consider one of the greatest of modern works in Christian theology.

My third bearing I hardly know how to define tersely. Its peculiar quality appeared in the Seminary lectures which preceded the writing of my book. No longer was the attitude apologetic, no longer was there anxious emphasis upon every possible sort of Christian defense. The need of our time, or of any other time, was, I now felt confident, simply the full realization of what the Christian religion profoundly means as a redemptional movement for all mankind.

Here, you must allow me to break my plan long enough to recall

those lecture-hours. In the magic of memory I can see not only the general mass of the students, but even the way they were seated, and the exact appearance of the room, and, through the windows, the background of great oak trees on the campus. Lectures there were when I could hardly wait for the men to reach their seats; and lectures there were when they would not let me stop at the ending of the period. All tasks, all difficult problems seemed to drop away before the size and sufficiency of our Saviour's infinite redemptional provision.

This realization of Christian adequacy is the main feature of my fourth bearing, the bearing expressed in *The Christian Faith*. But this main feature is sometimes interlaced with other features which come from my first and second bearings. Indeed, this book is a kind of epitome, rather a kind of organic eventuality of my whole theological life.

While there were these changes in bearing, and other smaller changes in points of emphasis and force of emphasis, there was, I discover, a real consistency throughout. In one of his characteristic essays, Emerson says:—"With consistency a great soul has simply nothing to do. He may as well concern himself with his shadow on the wall." This may be true as to all surface matters, but there is an *under consistency of trend* which is of the utmost importance. Emerson himself, in fact, was fully aware of the great difference between the two kinds of consistency, that of superficial items and that of general tendency, for later, in this very essay on "Self-Reliance," he says:—"The voyage of the best ship is a zigzag line of a hundred tacks. See the line from a sufficient distance and it straightens itself to the average tendency." It was just this "average tendency" that I cared for. I made tack after tack, as I went from one experience to another, but all the time I was sailing for the same port. In all these years, there has not been, if I understand my record, a shift in opinion, or a new statement of doctrine, where I was not seeking this one thing, namely, a perfect apprehension of the holy self-sacrifice of God in saving mankind from the penalty and curse of sin.

Indeed, it was this under consistency which kept me from becoming a mediating theologian. Twice I faced the fact that I was not moving along the popular "line of least resistance." And twice I seriously tried to adjust my views to such men as Bruce and Clarke, men whom

as thinkers I highly regarded. I wanted to gain a wider influence, I wanted to be more open to scientific opinion, I wanted to be more responsive to all modern winds; but when I once plainly saw that, with such a large change of course, I could not reach the Christian port, as it was marked on my chart, I resisted the temptation and sailed on alone.

BEFORE giving a definite statement of personal belief, we should consider, with quite a measure of attention, what some one has termed "creedal atmosphere." Belonging to every creed, at least to every creed actually held by living faith, there is a peculiar, penetrating atmosphere made by sentiments, ideals, opinions, and perhaps insistent volitions of moral venture; and this atmosphere has much to do with the creed's color, vitality, form, and even existence. Some of the elements of this creedal atmosphere are psychologically too evasive for rough capture; but other elements there are which can be easily discovered and noted, and these I wish to indicate here.

That I may gain the freedom to say all I need to say, I will practise a bit of rhetorical indirection. I will try to suggest a certain kind of creedal atmosphere by pointing out those things which I now regard as the most important primary characteristics of a thoroughly wholesome Christian theologian of the present time. By "primary characteristics" I mean those which are to be placed in precedence of natural ability, adequate scholarship, special training, and full personal preparation for the precise work in hand.

As one primary characteristic, I would name *the democratic spirit*. But this bandied phrase must be taken without any conventional shallowing. Taken in this deep way, the democratic spirit is different from the philanthropic spirit, which cares for all men and tries to help all men. It is quite possible to be a philanthropist and yet not to be a democrat at all. What, then, is the democratic spirit? Briefly defined, it is the sympathetic recognition of the basal equality of all men in simple manhood. Theodore Parker once declared that "Democracy meant not *I 'm as good as you are* but *You 're as good as I am.*"⁵ The remark shows the fine ethical insight usual with Theodore Parker, but it is lacking in accuracy. Democracy does not mean that one man is as good as another. Democracy does not mean that men are alike, that there is a human dead level as to character, personal force, individual talent, and unacquired opportunity,—Democracy merely

means that any man, stripped of accidents, is *just a man*. And because he is a man (not because he is this or that kind of a man), he has certain attributes, certain needs, certain rights, and certain possibilities in fellowship, progress, and destiny. All this the real democrat recognizes, not merely in theory, but also in spiritual sympathy. He claims all men as belonging to him in basal brotherhood. As has been beautifully said:—"The democrat may travel among men, but he never meets an entire stranger." Grant me a touch of daring and allow me to say that the finest democrat is, in finite measure, like his Lord, *a race-man*. His heart flies out into all the racial reaches of humanity. No human face is to him uninteresting. No human experience is beyond his concern. He can box the compass of mankind. He can understand anybody. For instance, he can enter the mood of James Keeley, as, after the Iroquois Theatre fire in Chicago, the great editor commands:—"Put nothing on the first page but names of the dead." ⁶ And, equally well, the democrat can understand Senator Quay, as the old partisan fighter says, a strange gleam coming into his tired eyes,—“No, I am dying, and you know it. I don't mind dying; but I do wish it were possible for me to get off into the great north woods and crawl out on a rock in the sun and die like a wolf.” ⁷

As another primary characteristic, I would name *ability searchingly to deal with the Zeitgeist*. Mr. Gilbert Chesterton, in a somewhat critical reference to Matthew Arnold, says:—"There must be (to use an Irishism) something shallow in the depths of any man who talks about the *Zeitgeist* as if it were a living thing." ⁸ Of course, the *Zeitgeist* is not a "living thing" in the sense that it is an individual being with a life-organism. But, for all that, the spirit of the time is a force to be reckoned with. It is *the trend of the time* in ideal and opinion, and it has an influence almost coercive upon men and almost determinative upon events. There are beliefs which it is difficult to keep, and standards which it is difficult to uphold, and motives which it is difficult to generate, and deeds which it is difficult to do; and all because the trend of the time is against such beliefs, standards, motives, and deeds.

Again: one needs, as to the features which make up the *Zeitgeist*, to discriminate, and then to utilize every worthy thing. I would go so far as to insist that a theologian should have a strong bias in favor of his own age, and seriously should look for timely elements. For example, he may regard *Ritschlianism* ⁹ as a creature of the time-

trend, and yet be able wisely to make use of the Ritschlian social emphasis. From this peculiar feature of the Ritschlian teaching, I myself have received benefit, a much greater benefit, I sometimes think, than I have ever publicly recognized. Then, there is *Socialism* itself (which is probably the most nearly complete manifestation of the *Zeitgeist*), surely the alert theologian can discover rich values in its views of social combination and industrial justice. So with the popular philosophy of *Pragmatism*, it may be superficial, but its practical stress upon "the workability of truth" can be appropriated.

In this connection, a word concerning Bergson and Eucken¹⁰ may, naturally, be expected; but I do not consider these philosophers as genuine outcomes of the time-tendency. Rather are they, I would say, signs, early morning hints in the sky of a new day. What the spirit of this new day will be, I am not ready even to surmise.

But the most testing thing a theologian has to do is to stand squarely and constantly against the non-Christian and anti-Christian features of the *Zeitgeist*—such features as the naturalistic conception of conversion, or the humanitarian conception of our Lord's person. Hopeless and again hopeless the effort seems. Indeed, I know of no other thing in the world which requires so much courage, so much trust in Christ, so much personal endurance, as simply, without hot appeal, to keep, against the trend of the time, the full Christian Faith.

As another primary characteristic, I would name *an appreciation of the Christian significance of the supernatural*. This point is of such extreme importance that, to make it more forcible, I will take the time to give several concrete examples of what I will call "miracle trituration." Here is a quotation from Professor Francis J. Hall's *Introduction to Dogmatic Theology*:¹¹—"The innovations which supernatural causation produces are analogous to those which men are capable of causing. The steam locomotive represents a startling innovation upon the course of phenomena previous to the invention, and the innovation is due to a cause transcending the native capacity of the physical means employed. But the laws of nature—i.e. in the sense of the ascertained working of natural causes, are used rather than violated, and a new cause, the human will and device, accounts for the novel result."

An equally significant passage I take from the new edition of Dr. Augustus H. Strong's notable *Systematic Theology*:¹²—"The Virgin-birth of Christ may be an extreme instance of parthenogenesis, which

Professor Loeb of Chicago has just demonstrated to take place in other than the lowest forms of life, and which he believes to be possible in all. Christ's resurrection may be an illustration of the power of the normal and perfect human spirit to take to itself a proper body, and so may be the type and prophecy of that great change when we too shall lay down our life and take it again."

Perhaps I can best cover the whole case by making distinct comments as follows:—(1) Professor Hall seems to fail to realize that man is himself a real part of the system of Nature which, in a large range of flexibility in combination, expressly provides for all his volitions and inventions. Within this range of flexibility, a steam locomotive at top speed is, in cosmic meaning, not at all different from a flying bird, and a flying bird is just as *natural* as a dead bird suddenly dropping to the ground. (2) As to parthenogenesis, several things should be said. In the first place, the facts, and scientific theories concerning the facts, need to be more thoroughly examined by the theologian. In the second place, parthenogenesis in *aphids*, or even in higher forms of life, has no relevance in our discussion. Our only question is *as to man*:—Is a human babe ever born of a virgin? Does the cosmos provide for a man's coming into existence with only one parent? (3) Taking Dr. Strong's two points together, I will say this:—If the birth and resurrection of our Lord turn out to be, under further scientific test, only events within cosmic provision, only high and prophetic examples of normal process in Nature, then they cease to hold place as supernatural in any degree whatsoever, and, ceasing to hold that peculiar place, they cease to have their peculiar Christian value.

This renders it best for me to give my own understanding of the Christian view of the supernatural:—The cosmos is an organic system; for this system the ordinary will of God is causal (that is, the organism of Nature expresses the *Divine habit*); whatever belongs to this system, or is provided for in the possible combinations of this system, is *natural*; whatever is beyond this, whatever is not cosmic, either in fact or in provision, is *supernatural*; and, in the very nature of the case, the supernatural is caused only by the extraordinary volitions of God.

But this is not enough to say. In the Christian view, the supernatural is always redemptional. To accomplish His purpose of man's redemption, God has, now and again, *willed beyond His habit*, and done things which are above present cosmic power and above future

cosmic possibility. And so all these attempts to normalize by trituration the miracles of our Lord's birth and resurrection must be withstood; for, however well-meant, they are really efforts to empty these mighty events of their deep redemptional meaning.

As another primary characteristic, I would name *an unyielding purpose to protect the moral veinage of Christian doctrine*. A very noticeable thing, for the student of religious phenomena, is the way there can be religious life without any moral concern. This unethical condition we might expect to find at the lowest point in the religious process, where there is nothing more than the grossest kind of superstition; but, as a matter of fact, we find it high enough up to be expressed even in prayer. In a recent book entitled *Pagan Prayers*,¹³ I came across a South Pacific Island prayer to the "God of Thieves." It is such an amazing curiosity of mere religiosity that I will give the English translation entire:—

"O Thou divine Outre-reter!
We go out for plunder.
Cause all things to sleep in the house.

—

Owner of the house, sleep on!
Threshold of the house, sleep on!
Little insects of the house, sleep on!
Central-post, ridge-pole, rafters,
—— thatch of the house, sleep on!
O Rongo, grant us success!"

Of course, with the Christian religion, as now taught and practised, there is no such utter over-riding of all moral concern; and yet no long and microscopic search is required to discover, even in Christianity, this same tendency to cultivate religion at the expense of ethical regard. And there are Christian men (or, at any rate, men who are, without apology, recognized as members of this or that Christian communion), men in business, men in politics, men in other situations affording natural opportunity for clash and competition and intrigue, who very suitably might pray:—"O Rongo, we go out for plunder. Grant us success!"

To check this tendency to separate the religious life from morals, the church, and first our preachers, need profound ethical indoctrina-

tion. And, to this end, the theologian must, while fully appreciating the significance of the supernatural, protect the moral veinage in Christian doctrine. By this, I mean that all through the doctrines—of God, sin, atonement, conversion, final judgment—there must be plain tracing of the moral love and moral demand and moral wrath of God, just as through the body of a leaf there is evident veinage, a structural network of visible veins.

As another (and it is the last which I care to consider in this paper) primary characteristic, I would name a *vital Christian experience theologically indicative*. Any real Christian experience has some theological tendency; but it is possible, by prayer and meditation, so to saturate the mind with Christian experience as to develop Christian insight. With this insight, the theologian does not find a finished doctrinal product, he finds merely a clew to profounder Biblical interpretation, or a line of fruitful suggestion in doctrinal relation. Never should we aim to reject scholarship, it has an extremely serviceable place in the church; but by scholarship alone no man can ever understand any Christian doctrine. Two eminent scholars, not long ago, were overheard talking about "the witness of the Holy Spirit." One of them, in a tone of academic superiority, said:—"It is nothing but a pious delusion." The other answered:—"Those who do not have the experience are quite likely to think so."

What we most need now, I am convinced, is a certain type of men—men like Dale and Godet—men who are able to make a sane theological use of their personal experience in Jesus Christ. This would not bring immediate doctrinal agreement as to all items in our faith; but it would start us in the right direction; it would furnish awareness of Christian values; it would lift us out of scholastic slavery into the realm of Christian submission and intense creedal concern. Then, then Augustine's great confessional appeal would be heard and heeded:—"When ye rise, when ye betake yourselves to sleep, repeat your Creed, repeat it to God. . . . Say not, I said it yesterday, I have said it to-day, I say it every day, I remember it right well. Rehearse thy faith. Look into thyself. Let thy Creed be as a mirror to thee. See thou thyself therein, whether thou believest all thou professest to believe, and rejoice in thy faith each day."¹⁴

Personal Creed¹⁵

I

I believe in one God, a personal and moral Spirit, without beginning, without cause, without need,¹⁶ and without end.

II

I believe in the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost; an individual, organic, eternal Trinity of self-knowing, self-decise persons; every one of the three persons necessary to the unity and activity and very existence of the Godhead; and all equal in power and wisdom and love and felicity and holiness.

III

I believe that the universe was willed into being by the Triune God, by Whom and in Whom all creatures have place; the primary cause in creation being the Father; the dynamic power in creation being the Holy Ghost; and the social executive in creation being the Son, without Whom, as St. John declares, "was not anything made that hath been made."

IV

I believe that the Human Race began, as the Bible teaches, with Adam and Eve; that they were created innocent and glad and free; that they disobeyed God when they were able to obey Him; that their disobedience was the start of human sin; that this start in sin put mankind, as a race, and every coming individual of mankind, as a man, in such an abnormal relation to the God of holy love as could be met and mastered only by a method extraordinary, supernatural, self-sacrificial.

V

I believe that all responsible sin is personal sin; that personal sin is not mere crudeness on the way to something better, is not superficial misconduct, is not even vice or crime; but is, however manifest, however hidden, intended violation of unquestioned moral

demand. Therefore, I must believe that a man's real responsibility is deeper than his apparent deed. He is responsible for all he is, for his moral character, which is a gathering deposit of every past thing freely done.

VI

I believe in Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour. I believe that He was conceived by the Holy Ghost and born of the Virgin Mary. And I believe that by this unfathomable miracle the only uncreated, eternally personal Son of God the Father voluntarily became man without ceasing to be God.

VII

I believe that our Lord, by His death, made an atonement for sin. And there are, I further believe, two reasons why this atonement satisfies God: ¹⁷—(1) Because it expresses for God the entire bearing of His absolute holiness toward both the sin and the sinner, His moral hatred for the one and His moral love for the other. (2) Because this atonement itself is but a means to this end, namely, a founding of a New Race in the New Adam, Jesus Christ; the establishment of an everlasting Brotherhood of Redemption.

VIII

I believe that Jesus Christ rose again bodily from the grave, and ascended into heaven, to begin, through the Holy Ghost, the actual building of the New Race.

IX

I believe that God, in His infinite mercy, is eager to save all men, and grants such grace to all, that whosoever will may have everlasting life.

X

I believe that we are justified by faith only; but this saving faith is normally a profoundly moral act, growing out of repentance, taxing every element of personal manhood, and finding complete expression only in noble conduct.

XI

I believe that even in this life we may so perfectly love our Lord that His will is supreme in our affairs, and every deed is done with a motive to glorify Him.

XII

I believe in the Holy Catholic Church as comprehending all truly Christian churches. And I believe that the external marks of a truly Christian church are precisely these three:—(1) The administration of the sacrament of Baptism “into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost.” (2) The administration of the sacrament of the Lord’s Supper by which we “proclaim the Lord’s death till He come.” (3) The preaching of the Gospel in its entire reach from the Incarnation to the Ascension of our Saviour.

XIII

I believe that the Bible is the supreme Book of the Church because it is God’s Word as to Redemption, and so is our final authority on the aim, history, and doctrines of Redemption. And I believe that the Bible should be interpreted *organically*, out from the center, which is the atoning death of Jesus Christ. And I further believe that this interpretation, to be surely Christian, should be made by men who have personally submitted to their Lord in heart and conscience and mind; and who now are united in Christian communion, living for Christian service, nourished by the means of grace, and guided by the Saviour through the Holy Ghost.¹⁸

XIV

I believe that the Christian Church should make a large place for national interest, deliberately cultivating intelligent patriotism; should be alive to all the vital issues of the day; should furnish not only support but also leadership in the great reform movements, whether moral, social, political, or industrial; should be zealous in works of philanthropy, such as the establishment of hospitals, homes for the old and incompetent, homes for orphan and outcast children, bethels for worn-out sailors, night-shelters for the hungry and houseless, places of refuge for the magdalens of the town, bureaus of protection for immigrants, and bureaus of service for men and women needing work.

And yet I believe that the main business of the Church is reaching the individual sinner, securing his conversion, placing him in Christian fellowship, building him up in Christian life and service, and

building up about him a believing community in our Lord Jesus Christ.

XV

I believe that probation ends with death, not because God is in haste, but because this life is expressly planned and managed to test motive, and to discover a man's final moral intention.

And so I believe that no change in fundamental personal character takes place beyond the grave; and yet I believe that in the Intermediate State,¹⁹ between death and the Resurrection, the personal spirit, "absent from the body" and "at home with the Lord," will be so developed and fashioned as perfectly to express, in every feature of individuality, that moral meaning which is fixed in the probation of time.

XVI

I believe that any one who rejects Jesus Christ, realizing who He is, will be lost, because such a rejection is equivalent to a rejection of the Holy Spirit, and such a rejection amounts to the destruction of all possibility of right motive.

XVII

I believe that any one who dies without hearing the Gospel, or without realizing who Christ is, will be judged by his use of earthly opportunity, under the demands of conscience vitalized by the Holy Spirit. And I believe that the very possibility of such test and judgment is due to the Atonement made, once for all, by Jesus Christ.

XVIII

I believe that the right motives for the work of Foreign Missions²⁰ are these:—(1) A desire to obey our Saviour's command to go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature. (2) A desire to grant to all men the present blessings of the Gospel. (3) A purpose to keep the Church at home so filled with the militant temper of Foreign Missions as to render all her members unselfish and aggressive. (4) A purpose to keep before the mind of the Church the size of the plan of Redemption. (5) A purpose to begin to realize the idea of a universal human brotherhood in Christ. (6) *A purpose to hasten, under all possible Christian pressure, the salvation*

of men, and thus to prepare them for the largest service and also for the largest destiny in the final kingdom of our Lord.

XIX

I believe that, at the end of the Millennium, our Lord will come again in visible form.

And I believe in the resurrection of the body, the body of the grave so being, in God's creative process, the *occasion* of the body of the resurrection, that the latter can be, under the law of identity, exactly traced back to the former.

And I further believe in the Final Judgment as in some way expressing God's final estimate of the personal character made by full choice in this life of probation.

XX

I believe that those upon whom our Lord, as judge, pronounces condemnation must be regarded as ever to serve some wise end in the universe, so that their creation shall not prove to be a total failure; and yet they must also be regarded as to suffer an everlasting penalty no less awful than our Saviour's own words indicate.

XXI

I believe that the Redeemed, a company which no man can number, all saved by our Lord, all perfected by our Lord, will dwell forever with Him, *His people*, a mighty brotherhood in complete social reciprocity, where there will be such an interchange of life, service, and joy that every man, while remaining distinctly himself, will be augmented by the entire experience of the whole brotherhood.

This is that New Race—which realizes now God's original purpose in creating man—which, in the final universe, completes the cosmic expression of all God is—which is the center of the everlasting kingdom of God.

Thus comes the triumph of our God!

"And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunders, saying,

Hallelujah: for the Lord our God, the Almighty, reigneth!"

Notes

¹ Dr. Horton I had seen once before, when, in 1893, he came to the United States and delivered the "Yale Lectures on Preaching."

² As a matter of record, I will note a number of items concerning the publication and sale of the book. Manuscript sent to Eaton & Mains, New York, in March, 1905; work actually begun early in May; first books on sale September 15; the first finished copy taken by Dr. Mains; the second finished copy, the author's copy, sent to President Buttz.

Sales for the eight years as follows:—

First year.....	2307
Second year	597
Third year.....	490
Fourth year.....	355
Fifth year.....	561
Sixth year.....	412
Seventh year	389
Eighth year.....	460
Total	<hr/> 5571

Word has just come from Tokyo that two of our Drew graduates have made *The Christian Faith* available for the missionary work in Japan; Arthur D. Berry (fellow in 1898) having prepared a vital "outline synopsis" for use in the Theological School of Aoyama Gakuin; and Kyugoro Obata (class of 1898) having translated the book into the Japanese language.

³ The fourteen theological utterances are these:—

I

Inaugural Address, School of Theology, Boston University, October 9, 1889. Published entire in the next issue of *Zion's Herald*.

II

Sermon on "The Incarnation of our Lord." Published in *Boston Homilies* for 1891. Publishers, Hunt & Eaton, New York.

III

Statement as to the "Higher Criticism." Published in *Zion's Herald*, March 22, 1893; and then in *Der Christliche Apologete*, April 6, 1893.

IV

Article: "Robert Forman Horton—his Lectures on Preaching; his Critical Inquiry; and his Attempt at Reconstruction." Published in the *Methodist Review*, March-April, 1894.

V

Inaugural Address, Drew Theological Seminary, October 15, 1896. Published entire in the next issue of *The Christian Advocate*.

VI

Article: "The Authority of Our Lord and of the Bible to the Christian Man." Published in two issues of *The Independent*, November 11 and 18, 1897.

VII

An *Elective Course of Lectures in Systematic Theology*. Seminary edition, 160 numbered copies, September, 1901.

VIII

Sacramental Sermon, preached February 25, 1903. Subject: "The Christian Valuation of Men." Published in Vol. III of *Modern Sermons by World Scholars*. Publishers, Funk & Wagnalls, New York.

IX

The Christian Faith—Personally Given in a System of Doctrine. Appeared in September, 1905. Publishers, Eaton & Mains, New York.

X

Article: "The Catechism of Sir Oliver Lodge." Published in the *Methodist Review*, September-October, 1907.

XI

Sacramental Sermon, preached February 26, 1908. Subject: "Our Extreme Need in the Christian Church of Illumination from Our Lord Jesus Christ." Edition of 500 copies printed for the Senior Class. Also published later in the *Homiletic Review*.

XII

Article: "Professor Denney's Irenic Attempt." Published in the *Methodist Review*, September-October, 1909.

XIII

Matriculation Day Address, delivered September 28, 1910. Subject: "The Supreme Importance in the Christian Life and Theology of Personal Submission to Jesus Christ." Edition of 1000 copies printed in January, 1911. Publishers, Eaton & Mains, New York.

XIV

Article: "A New Estimate of the Theological Situation." Published in *Methodist Review* (quarterly, Nashville), October, 1911.

⁴ Professor Orr's "Kerr Lectures" were delivered in 1890-91; but the book was not out until 1893.

⁵ Quoted by James Russell Lowell in his address on "Democracy," delivered in England in 1884.

⁶ The entire incident is given by Peter Clark Macfarlane in Collier's *National Weekly*, June 28, 1913.

⁷ See "Applied Idealism," by Theodore Roosevelt, in *The Outlook*, June 28, 1913.

⁸ Page 160 of Chesterton's *The Victorian Age in Literature*. American edition, Henry Holt & Co., New York.

⁹ Of the many books written about *Ritschlianism*, the best one, everything considered, is Ernest A. Edghill's *Faith and Fact*, Macmillan, 1910.

¹⁰ In the flood of Bergson-Eucken literature, there are two brief discussions which should not be allowed to pass unnoticed:—(1) "Bergson as seen from a Preacher's Study." An article by Dr. Lynn Harold Hough, published in *The Bible Magazine*, April, 1913. (2) *Rudolf Eucken's Message to our Age*. By Professor Henry C. Sheldon. Eaton & Mains, 1913.

¹¹ This is the first volume in a series on "Dogmatic Theology," the series to be completed in ten volumes. See page 43.

¹² Vol. I, pp. 119 and 120. In his recent book, *The Doctrine of the Person of Jesus Christ*, Professor Mackintosh says:—"But first it is well to say emphatically that arguments drawn from biology as to the possibility of what is called parthenogenesis are wholly beside the mark. If the Virgin-birth is real, its meaning is indissociably bound up with its supernatural character; and this should be avowed frankly." See page 531.

¹³ Prayers collected by Marah Ellis Ryan. Book published by A. C. McClurg & Co., Chicago, 1913.

¹⁴ Quoted by William A. Curtis in his *History of Creeds and Confessions of Faith*.

¹⁵ In preparing to write this "Personal Creed," I did two things:—(1) To get into the confessional atmosphere, I read three books, *The History of Creeds* (noted above); *The Rule of Faith*, by Professor W. P. Paterson; and *The Fundamental Christian Faith*, by the late Professor Charles Augustus Briggs. (2) I examined all the creedal statements that I had made in my twenty-five years of teaching. Of these statements, the most important was published in the *Methodist Review*, September-October, 1909. After discussing the principles under which a creed should be formed, I offered the following "as a tentative expression of the most essential features of Christian belief":—

I believe in God the Father through Jesus Christ, His only uncreated Son; Who voluntarily became man without ceasing to be God, and died upon the cross to make possible our salvation; and rose again bodily from the grave, and ascended into heaven, to begin, through the Holy Ghost, His everlasting kingdom as Lord and Saviour.

In making this creed, I was thinking of the Christian community of believers; but in making the "Personal Creed," I am thinking only of myself, and trying to express all the important things in the body of my own faith.

¹⁶ I want to express the fact that, just as there is no cause back of God, so there is no *necessary* creation in front of God. Entirely I wish to shut out the pantheistic notion that God, to develop, or to complete Himself, *must create*. Creation is for God, as Martensen says, a "*superfluity*." See Martensen's *Christian Dogmatics*, page 114.

¹⁷ In another connection, I wrote as follows concerning the satisfaction of God's holiness:—"In satisfying the demand of God's holiness in regard to human sin, two features are to be noted: *First, moral emphasis*. Inasmuch as Jesus Christ is God's own Son incarnate, His death—the fact that He is obliged to die—is not made an exception—is not granted a supernatural escape—is treated precisely as any ordinary human sinner is treated—HIS death, I say, places an infinite moral emphasis, a kind of extremity of endorsement, upon God's chosen method of expressing His hatred of sin by destroying through bodily death the Adamic Race. *Second, redemptional movement*. But Jesus Christ does not die merely to die—He dies *in order that* He may, in the total experience of death, gain the profoundest empiric relation to the penal quality of death. This awful experience is necessary for the perfection of our Lord in racial saviourhood. This is His '*taste of death* for every man.' This is the making 'the author of their salvation perfect through sufferings.' And this perfection in saviourhood is required before our Lord can establish that New Race which shall be central in a final universe expressive of all God is. Thus the death of Christ is a redemptional movement as well as a moral emphasis.

"The atonement for sin is in the death of Christ because it is precisely this death which for God completely expresses the entire bearing of absolute holiness toward both sin and the sinner. *As moral emphasis* Christ's death utterly expresses God's hatred of sin. *As redemptional movement* Christ's death utterly expresses God's love for men. Or, we may put it in this way:—The death of Christ satisfies God because it expresses the divine holiness both *destructively and constructively*. Sin God so hates as to self-demand the death of His only uncreated Son as an infinite moral emphasis; mankind God so loves as to self-demand the death of His only uncreated Son as an actual movement toward racial redemption. In the death of Christ *all* the holiness of God is, under the law of self-expression, flung out into concrete historic fact."

¹⁸ This statement is about the same as the one I made in *Personal Submission to Jesus Christ*.

¹⁹ Recognition of the fact of the Intermediate State and its Christian significance is not peculiar to me. It is found again and again in Protestant Theology. Here, for example, is a passage from Macpherson's *Christian Dogmatics*:—"If it be so, then, that the whole undisturbed occupation of this intermediate state is introspective and reflective, it is evident that we have here at least elements which make a process of purifying possible. This, however, is very far from a doctrine of a Romish purgatory." Page 456.

²⁰ See *The Christian Faith*, page 444.

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